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THE CYPRIOTE "RESTORATIONS."

THE trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art have done their utmost to smother the scandal consequent upon the discovery by Mr. Feuardent of General Di Cesnola's bad faith in palming off on the American public his patched-up and comparatively worthless collection of Cypriote antiquities; but, like Banquo's ghost, it "will not down." Nothing will satisfy the public but a new investigation. There is overwhelming evidence that the inquiry conducted by the Directors' Committee was a failure, if it was really intended to get at the truth. But if the result was arrived at in good faith, still the subsequent accumulation of charges and new evidence by thoroughly reputable persons would make a new investigation imperative.

Since our last issue, a bombshell has been thrown into the Cesnola camp by the publication in *The Times* of a letter from Mr. A. D. Savage, late assistant director and archæologist of the Museum, who explains why he has resigned his position in that institution:

To the Editor of *The New York Times*:

When Mr. G. L. Feuardent published his charges in *THE ART AMATEUR* of August, 1880, that certain sculptures in the Cesnola collection were restored and the restorations concealed, a statement made by me to a reporter of *The Evening Post* was printed in that paper August 28, 1880. It was that there were no restorations in the Cesnola collection. I was at that time an assistant of the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in charge of the antiquities. This statement, honestly made at the time, I discovered a year after, in the last week of September, 1881, to be very far from the truth, for I found a number of serious restorations in the sculptures. The first question asked by a student of archæology about a production of antiquity is, how much of it is genuine? The Cesnola collection is of very great value to archæologists, and an opinion on that point from the Curator, who was also commissioned to write the Museum's hand-books of the collection, would probably have some weight with such students. When, therefore, I discover my positive declaration that no restorations exist is false, through the discovery of many and serious restorations, students of archæology have a right to demand that I correct my mistake. Why I am so late in doing this will be seen from the following account:

When the Director, Gen. Di Cesnola, returned from Europe, I reported my discovery to him. He assured me that whatever restorations I had discovered had been done without his knowledge, probably during his absence in Cyprus (1872-7). He assured me, moreover, that the restorations should be published; but as we could not agree on the date of this publication, I resigned and left the service of the Museum, November 30 last. I determined to make another effort toward immediate publication by the authorities of the Museum, and sent, accordingly, a communication on the subject the last week in December. I was gratified by the answer (dated January 6), that "the whole question as to the repair and restoration of the Museum antiquities is before the Executive Committee, who propose to treat of the same fully in the forthcoming annual report, which is to be issued within a few weeks." This report was issued February 13, but I cannot consider its discussion of the subject a publication of the restorations, for not one is specified, and this I had hoped would be done in every case. . . . I will add that none of the restorations in question are included in those declared to be such by Mr. Feuardent in *THE ART AMATEUR* of August, 1880.

A. D. SAVAGE.

Mr. Savage describes, in a second letter, some sixteen statues with restorations. About one-third of this lot it appears have been given nice new Greek noses, without regard to the obvious fact that many of the faces in every other respect are Semitic. New legs, mostly plaster, have been given to one statue; an Egyptian headdress of plaster has been added to another, and the wings and tail of a dove made of wood and coated with plaster have been put in the hand of a third. It will be easy to test the plaster restorations, Mr. Savage points out; for "two or three strokes of a wet sponge will remove the wash which makes the plaster look like stone. Where the restoration is of cement or stone the test becomes much more difficult." He only mentions those restorations he tested for himself. He says:

"The rest I could not test without changing the surface of the sculpture as exhibited to the public, a thing which I had not the right to do, not being one of the owners of the collection, and the Director not being yet come back from Europe."

After Gen. Di Cesnola's return, "two heads in Egyptian dress" disappeared from their case. Mr. Savage asked him about them, and was told that restorations had been made on them without his knowledge when he was in Cyprus, and he had had them unmade.

The next testimony is most important of all. It is that of Mr. Feodore Gehlen, who was the repairer at the Metropolitan Museum while it was in Fourteenth Street. Of course his evidence would have been invaluable if the trustees had wished their investigating committee to get at the truth, but they were very careful not to call him. He speaks now for the first time in the following statement to a reporter of *The Times*:

"I was a repairer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art when it was in Fourteenth Street, and worked under the orders of Gen. Di Cesnola until the whole collection was ready. All that I did was under his command. He saw every day what I had done—the noses, heads, and different parts of the bodies which I had arranged. We took plaster of Paris; sometimes pieces of the same stone. Every day, I repeat, he saw what was done. I am a draughtsman, and I kept as nearly as I could to what were the forms. Gen. Di Cesnola was so well satisfied that when he was in Cyprus he wrote me a letter of thanks for what I had done. I did not attempt to color the statues, but they are now quite different from what they were when I had finished with them. The trustees never had anything to do with them. Mr. Hutchins saw me do the work. There was a big basket, with pieces of vases and pots all broken up. When Gen. Di Cesnola went to Cyprus, he told me when I found leisure to work them up. I did so, and made up a great many vases from these fragments. I tried always to get the exact pieces. Occasionally I would fill up the gaps to make them complete. All was, I again repeat, done under Gen. Di Cesnola's orders. I know the objects in the Museum very well as they are now, and there have been changes in many of them. To shift any blame on me is most unjust on the part of Gen. Di Cesnola, for I never did anything without his orders. That he was perfectly satisfied with me I can prove by his letters. Mr. Hutchins ought to be called for. His testimony would fully substantiate what I have stated. Some of the statues, as they came to New York, had already been mended with plaster. Whether done in Cyprus or London, I do not know."

A few days after all this interesting testimony of Mr. Savage, archæologist of the Museum, and Mr. Gehlen, surgeon of the Museum, both of whom are on the side of Mr. Feuardent, Mr. Clarence Cook, the fearless art critic of *The Tribune* (who, having a very decided opinion of his own as to the merits of the controversy, does not allow the policy of his paper to influence his personal action in the matter under discussion), published in an illustrated pamphlet a crushing arraignment of General Di Cesnola, entitled "Transformations and Migrations of Certain Statues in the Cesnola Collection." The illustrations of statue No. 39, as published in our supplement, are reprinted from this pamphlet and speak for themselves. As Mr. Cox, the former photographer of the Museum, has declared that he himself saw the stonemason cut out of a solid rock the base and the lower part of the figure, the charges in regard to this particular statue seem to be proved beyond a doubt. Mr. Cook seeks to demonstrate the two following grave propositions:

1st. Alterations and restorations were made by Mr. Gehlen, with the full knowledge and approval of General Di Cesnola.

2d. General Di Cesnola invented the story of discovering the temple of Venus at Golgoi, and misstated the locations where he found certain objects, and changed some of the objects themselves to make them conform with this theory.

In regard to the first proposition, it is only necessary to publish the following extracts, copied by Mr. Cook from two letters now in the possession of Mr. Feuardent, received by a gentleman at that time connected with the Museum, "which will show Mr. Di Cesnola's anxiety about the condition of his made-up antiques during his absence at the manufactory in Cyprus:"

"ISLAND OF CYPRUS,

"SALAMIS, May 29, 1874.

"* * * And let me know if the statues have not suffered during the winter; I wish Mr. Gehlen would carefully visit them and see if the cement has not moved. Tell him I will soon have other work of the same kind from Cyprus to do as I promised him. I like very much that German, he is an excellent artist and a good man; please thank him for the glue. * * *

"(Signed) L. P. DI CESNOLA."

"ISLAND OF CYPRUS,

"LARNACA, November 4, 1874.

"* * * Please thank Mr. Gehlen for the glue, which has turned out very necessary to me here, and it is very good. Tell him he will soon have another lot of antiquities to put together and mend; and I hope he will do the next work as nicely, intelligently and well as the former one. I have certainly been very much satisfied in the able way he worked; please tell him so; and if any declaration, certificate or other document from me to him may be hereafter desirable, I will always do everything I can to help him to be known in New York. * * *

"(Signed) L. P. DI CESNOLA."

How is it possible for any one who reads these letters, showing how thoroughly Mr. Gehlen was working under the orders of the Director of the Museum, to reconcile them with the latter's solemn declaration before the trustees' investigating committee: "In the entire collection I have not made a single restoration of any object or part of any object in stone."

The second proposition Mr. Cook proceeds to demonstrate on statements made by General Di Cesnola himself, and by Mr. Savage, before he felt called upon to doubt the honesty of his chief. He says:

"I think it most probable that Mr. Di Cesnola made but few excavations anywhere in Cyprus, and that while he may have found a few objects at the place he chooses to call Golgoi, he made no such find as he asserts he did; and I also think it unlikely that he ever discovered the Temple of Venus, or any temple whatever, in that place. The most reasonable supposition is that he bought nearly all the objects in this collection from the natives; and, since he now declares that if there have been restorations, additions, etc., made to his statues, they were made without his knowledge, it may be admitted for the sake of argument. . . . There are no more adroit manufacturers of antiquities to be found than the people of the Levant. They can, indeed, outwit the very devil himself. The Museum of Berlin rejoices in a collection of Moabite pottery bought at a great price, but now known to have been manufactured, and every collector suffers in turn from the tricks of these adroit Levantines. . . . The Levantines covered up well the traces of their skilful piecing, and had the statues been left as they came out of their cases from Cyprus, it would have been long before any eye, however sharp, could have detected the fraud. But they were put to soak in baths of acid, they were washed and scraped, mended and painted, until it is impossible to distinguish the 'archaic' from the 'Græco-Roman'—they all look as if made yesterday."

"But when the collection had grown in Cyprus on Mr. Di Cesnola's hands to an inconvenient bulk, when all the private purchasers who could be reached had been supplied, and the finest objects in his possession had been disposed of, it then became necessary to invent some scheme by which the whole collection could be got rid of in bulk. This was the way in which the fiction of the great Golgoi find came to be invented. It was not at first successful. Neither Russia, nor Germany, nor France, nor England took the bait. England, least of all. . . . The whole story of the great desire the British Museum had to get possession of this collection is absolutely without foundation."

While General Di Cesnola was in Cyprus he corresponded with Mr. Cook, whose good offices on *The Tribune* he was anxious to secure. He wrote to him: "I have already discovered several sculptures at Salamis, but I have only photographed a few, a copy of which I herewith enclose for you." Mr. Cook publishes a catalogue of objects now in the Museum of which General Di Cesnola sent him photographs, and shows that while endorsed in the latter's own handwriting as having been found at Salamis, these are now officially declared to have been found at Golgoi.

Among other objects General Di Cesnola claims to have found at Golgoi are statue No. 39—"A man holding the head of a horned animal"—and the so-called "Aphrodite and Eros." He seems to have quite forgotten that he told his friend, Mr. Hiram Hitchcock, that the first of these he found at Salamis, and that gentleman published the fact in his article on the Cypriote collection in *Harper's Magazine* (July, 1872), narrating how gratified he was to learn from the General that this interesting statue was discovered on the very spot "where we sat together at Salamis." As to the "Aphrodite and Eros," Mr. Cook declares the statue to be "a fraudulent patchwork of unrelated parts." He says:

"I believe that I express the convictions of many who have studied the subject, when I say that the most probable solution of the difficulty is that the statue of Aphrodite and Eros was expressly manufactured to meet the growing want of at least one representation in so large a find, of the divinity to whom the temple at Golgoi was dedicated. Not the least suspicious circumstance is the fact that it was never sent to London, where the brief curiosity it would have been sure to excite might have led to a closer inspection than would have been good for its reputation. It has never been seen by an archæologist."

Since the publication of Mr. Cook's pamphlet and the important testimony of Mr. Savage and Mr. Gehlen, it seems as if a new investigation into Mr. Feuardent's charges would be made. It is certainly to be hoped that the trustees will oppose the wishes of the public in this matter no farther. For the sake of their own reputation, if for no higher motive, they should have this scandal cleared up once and for all. The policy of silence can no longer prevail. The whole truth should and must be told, no matter who suffers.

A YOUNG man in Syracuse writes to us: "What chance is there for a draughtsman and designer from the country to go to New York and make his way? Are acquaintance and influence necessary, or can a stranger hope to succeed if he possess genuine ability? By succeeding I mean making a decent living and in time something more." We should say that with ability and industry his chances are good. With the force, originality and humor, for instance, of our contributor, George R. Halm, and the polished, scholarly draughtsmanship of Camille Piton, his services we believe would find a ready market as soon as he became known. "Acquaintance and influence" are desirable, of course, but they are not "necessary." Good designers of steady habits are always in demand in New York.